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ATTITUDES TOWARD MAKING A TRANSFER: FACTORS RELATED TO
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Organizational Behavior Research

Department of Management

Department of Psychology

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Factors Related to
Reenlistment Intentions,
Overall Satisfaction, Attitude
Toward Future Moves, and An
Analysis of Qualitative Data
Relevant to Transfer Attitudes

James B. Shaw
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December, 1983

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) Survey and interview data were collected from a sample of 143 NCO's who had recently been notified that they would be transferred to a new assignment. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concerning six research questions: (1) what factors relevant to transfer situations are predictive of career intentions, intent to reenlist, overall USAF satisfaction and atti- tude toward future moves; (2) what factors affect the adjustment time - profitable time ratio in job transfer situations; (3) are individuals given		

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Block 20: (continued) sufficient notice of transfers to allow adequate preparation; (4) what factors were cited as affecting attitude toward transfers and subsequent transfer adjustment; (6) what job-related factors affect attitude towards transfers; and (8) how do pre-transfer expectations affect transfer attitudes and what are the sources of those expectations. Correlation, regression and various qualitative data analysis techniques were used to answer these questions. Implications for transfer policies and future research needs are discussed.



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Attitudes Toward Making a Transfer: Factors Related To Reenlistment
Intentions, Overall Satisfaction, Attitude Toward Future Moves, And
An Analysis of Qualitative Data Relevant to Transfer Attitudes

Shaw, Fisher, and Woodman (1983b) reported the results of a study of 143 U.S. Air Force Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's) in which eight predictors relevant to transfer situations were used to develop a predictive model of Permanent Change of Station (PCS) attitudes. Data were collected on eight major independent variables: (1) similarity of the new and present locations, (2) transfer frequency, (3) perceived advancement, (4) attractiveness of the new assignment, (5) attractiveness of the present assignment, (6) past transfer adjustment success, (7) notice given before transfer, and (8) aspects of transfer history. Data were also collected concerning the eagerness or reluctance of individuals to make an upcoming PCS of which they had been notified. Correlational analyses showed moderate to strong relationships between several of the predictors and PCS reluctance/eagerness. Regression analyses developed from these data were highly predictive of PCS attitudes.

As part of this study data were also collected concerning transferees' intention to make the USAF their career, their intention to reenlist, their overall satisfaction with the USAF and their attitude toward making unspecified future PCS moves. Additionally, "qualitative" interview data were collected which related to their upcoming PCS and to the transfer process in general.

This report presents analyses of these additional data. Specifically, these analyses address six issues of considerable practical relevance to the U.S. Air Force. These issues are:

(1) Do factors related to immediate PCS attitudes also relate to such broader issues as career intentions, reenlistment, overall satisfaction with the USAF, and attitudes towards future PCS moves?

(2) Any transfer requires that time be spent by the individual adjusting to and coping with his/her new environment. Pinder and Das (1979) note that after a transfer, individuals must be in their new positions some time before they become expert enough to be "profitable" to the organization. The length of adjustment time relative to profitable time should be of concern to organizations and should influence the frequency with which transfers are made. If transfers are made too frequently, individuals may spend most of their time getting "up to speed" and not making a significant contribution to the organization. Data relevant to this issue were collected and will be presented in this report.

(3) Burke (1974) found that the amount of time given to individuals to make a move was positively related to satisfaction with the new assignment. Pinder (1979) found that time allowed to prepare for a move was related to satisfaction with organizational transfer policies. What, then, is the notice time perceived by NCO's as necessary to adequately prepare for a transfer? Data were collected on this issue.

(4) Our interviews with NCO's also included several open-ended questions about which factors "made transfers easier" or which caused the reluctance/eagerness of individuals to make a transfer. The factors that were mentioned most frequently, and whether or not those factors changed across different subgroups of individuals, will be discussed in this report.

(5) In their 1983b report, Shaw et al. found a very strong relationship between PCS attitude and whether or not the new job assignment "matched" the "ideal" job of the individual. Since it seems that job match is a very strong predictor of PCS attitude, a question remains as to what factors in the job are viewed as most important in determining that match. Qualitative data were collected relevant to this issue.

(6) Finally, in an earlier study with the U.S. Marine Corps, Shaw, Fisher and Woodman (1983a) found that post-transfer adjustment was significantly related to expectations developed about the new assignment prior to the actual transfer. Whether or not an individual knows "what to expect" may well be related to transfer attitudes. Data concerning the extent to which individuals felt that they had sufficient pre-transfer information and the sources from which that information was obtained were collected and will be presented below.

Method

A total of 143 U.S. Air Force NCO's were interviewed using an instrument designed specifically for this study. The survey instrument included both fixed-response and open-ended items. Data were collected in April and May of 1983.

Sample

One hundred forty-three non-commissioned officers (staff, technical, master, and chief master sergeants) participated in the study. The individuals represented 81 different job classifications (AFSC's) and were stationed at one of seven U.S. Air Force bases in Texas, Louisiana, and

Arkansas (Brooks AFB, Randolph AFB, Lackland AFB and Bergstrom AFB in Texas; Barksdale AFB and England AFB in Louisiana; and Little Rock AFB in Arkansas). Each of these individuals had received notice that he was to make a permanent change of station (PCS). Individuals selected for the sample were scheduled to leave for their new assignment sometime between June 1 and December 31, 1983. The sample was selected from a listing provided to the researchers by the USAF which included the names of approximately 3000 USAF personnel who were scheduled to make a PCS sometime during 1983 or early 1984. All individuals in the study were male. Demographic information relevant to the sample is presented in Table 1. No attempt was made to select individuals proportional to any job classification system. Using USAF data, subjects were selected based upon their past transfer history so that a broad range of individuals, some of whom had been transferred infrequently while others had been transferred frequently, would be included in the sample. It should be noted that number of transfers is usually correlated with number of years of military service. Our sample selection process attempted to minimize this relationship as much as possible, by including some longer service personnel with few moves.

Survey Instrument

A survey instrument was developed specifically for the present study based upon information collected from (1) preliminary talks with USAF personnel, (2) research done earlier on transfer processes in the U.S. Marine Corps (see Shaw, Fisher, and Woodman, 1983a), and (3) a thorough

Table 1
Demographic Information on Sample

<u>Base of Present Location</u>		<u>Military Service</u>	
	<u>N</u>		<u>N</u>
1. Barksdale AFB	21	1. Staff Sergeant	62
2. Bergstrom AFB	23	2. Technical Sergeant	45
3. Brooks AFB	7	3. Master Sergeant	31
4. England AFB	16	4. Chief Master Sergeant	5
5. Lackland AFB	36		
6. Little Rock AFB	20		
7. Randolph AFB	20		

Total Active Military Service (no. of months)

\bar{X} = 160.32	SD = 57.1
0-72 months	N = 11
73-144 months	N = 46
145-216 months	N = 61
217 + months	N = 25

Marital Status

Married/spouse not in military	N = 116
Married/spouse in military	N = 10
Divorced and not remarried	N = 7
Never been married	N = 9
Legally separated	N = 1

Number of Dependents

\bar{X} = 2.6	SD = 1.3
No. children	N = 10
One child	N = 18
Two children	N = 34
Three children	N = 51
Four children	N = 17
Five children	N = 12
Six children	N = 1

review of relevant literature on transfers in organizations. The final instrument consisted of three sections with a total of 105 items. The first section of the survey was completed by the individual and consisted primarily of demographic items. The second section of the survey consisted of both fixed-response and open-ended interview questions. The third section of the survey consisted of fixed response items which were completed by the individual. Below, the measures used to investigate each of the six issues raised in the introduction will be described.

Issue 1: Measures

Four dependent and eleven independent variables relevant to the first issue were measured. The four dependent variables were: (1) intent to make the USAF a career, (2) intent to reenlist, (3) overall satisfaction with the USAF and (4) attitude toward future PCS moves. Each variable was measured using a single fixed-response item. These items are presented in Table 2. Data on eleven major independent variables were collected. Several of these variables were measured using more than one item. These variables were: (1) overall similarity of present assignment to next, (2) transfer frequency (total number of career transfers, average # of months per transfer, time since last transfer, days TDY during the last 12 months, and number of TDY assignments during the last 12 months), (3) perceived advancement in the upcoming move, (4) overall attractiveness of present assignment (degree of match with ideal and overall satisfaction with present assignment), (5) attractiveness of next assignment (overall match of assignment with ideal and overall expected satisfaction with next

assignment), (6) post transfer adjustment success (rated family adjustment difficulty, rated personal adjustment difficulty, and number of weeks needed for personal adjustment to most recent move), (7) notice time given prior to transfer, (8) ratio of preferred assignments to total number of career transfers, (9) attitude toward to move to present assignment, (10) attitude toward move to next assignment and (11) perceived gain/loss ratio in move to next assignment. The measures of independent variables 1-8, and 10 are discussed thoroughly in Shaw, Fisher, and Woodman (1983b) and will not be repeated here. Independent variable 10 was the major dependent variable in the 1983b study i.e. attitude toward PCS move. Variables 9 and 11 were measured using fixed-response items. These are presented in Table 2.

Issue 2: Measures

Three indexes of time necessary to adjust to a job were measured: (1) number of weeks to adjust to the technical aspects of the job in the present assignment, (2) number of weeks to adjust to co-workers in the present job assignment and (3) number of weeks to get "up to speed" in the present job assignment. Additionally time since their last PCS transfer was used as an index of the length of their present job assignment. Two other measures were also thought to be relevant to Issue 2: (1) the total number of career transfers and (2), the similarity of the present job assignment to previous assignments. These two measures were taken because it was felt that they would relate to the time needed by an individual to become "profitable" in a job assignment. Measures relevant to Issue 2 are presented in Table 3. The measures of total number of career transfers and

Table 2

Measures of Career Intent, Intent to Reenlist,
Overall USAF Satisfaction, Attitudes Toward Future Moves,
Reluctance to Move To Present Assignment, And Gain/Loss Ratio

Dependent Variable 1: Intent to Make USAF A Career

What is your intention toward making the Air Force a career (20 years+)?
Check one.

- ☐ 1. Definitely will not make the Air Force a career
- ☐ 2. Probably will not make the Air Force a career
- ☐ 3. Lean toward not making the Air Force a career
- ☐ 4. Undecided
- ☐ 5. Lean toward making the Air Force a career
- ☐ 6. Probably will make the Air Force a career
- ☐ 7. Definitely will make the Air Force a career

Dependent Variable 2: Intent to Reenlist

What are intentions toward reenlisting in the Air Force when your present
enlistment expires? Check one.

- ☐ 1. Definitely will not reenlist
- ☐ 2. Probably will not reenlist
- ☐ 3. Lean toward not reenlisting
- ☐ 4. Undecided
- ☐ 5. Lean toward reenlisting
- ☐ 6. Probably will reenlist
- ☐ 7. Definitely will reenlist
- ☐ 8. Don't need to reenlist, will be able to retire (code as missing data)

Dependent Variable 3: Overall USAF Satisfaction

Taking all things into consideration, how satisfied/dissatisfied are you
with you quality of life in the Air Force? Check one.

- ☐ 1. very dissatisfied
- ☐ 2. dissatisfied
- ☐ 3. slightly dissatisfied
- ☐ 4. neither dissatisfied nor satisfied
- ☐ 5. slightly satisfied
- ☐ 6. satisfied
- ☐ 7. very satisfied

Table 2 (cont.)

Dependent Variable 4: Attitude Toward Future Moves

How willing are you to move again 3-4 years in the future?

- ☐ 1. will not move again
- ☐ 2. very reluctant to move again
- ☐ 3. somewhat reluctant to move again
- ☐ 4. slightly reluctant to move again
- ☐ 5. neither reluctant nor eager to move again
- ☐ 6. slightly eager to move again
- ☐ 7. somewhat eager to move again
- ☐ 8. very eager to move again
- ☐ 9. not applicable, will be retiring (coded as missing data)

Independent Variable 9: Reluctance To Move To Present Assignment

Think back to the time when you learned that you would be moved to this assignment. What were your feelings about making this move?

- ☐ 1. I was very reluctant to make the move
- ☐ 2. I was somewhat reluctant
- ☐ 3. I was slightly reluctant
- ☐ 4. I was neither reluctant nor eager
- ☐ 5. I was slightly eager
- ☐ 6. I was somewhat eager
- ☐ 7. I was eager

Independent Variable 11: Gain/Loss Ratio

Overall, at this point do you see this move as representing a net gain or a net loss for you and your family?

- ☐ 1. large loss
- ☐ 2. moderate loss
- ☐ 3. slight loss
- ☐ 4. even trade
- ☐ 5. slight gain
- ☐ 6. moderate gain
- ☐ 7. large gain

Table 3

Three Measures of Job Adjustment Time, And a
Measure of Job Similarity

1. Time To Adjust To Technical Aspects Of The Job

How many weeks/months did it take you to learn the technical aspects of your job assignment? _____

2. Time To Adjust To Co-Workers On The Job

How many weeks/months did it take you to adjust to the interpersonal aspects associated with your new co-workers, superior officers, etc. on this assignment? _____

3. Time To Get Up To Speed

Overall, it takes a while to "get up to speed" in a new job. About how long did it take you to feel normally productive in your new job? That is, to reach the performance level that is typical of you? _____
Weeks

4. Similarity Of Present Job To Previous Job

Considering the nature of your present job assignment, and the job you had in your previous assignment, how does your present job compare to your last job?

- ___ 1. not similar at all
- ___ 2. slightly similar
- ___ 3. similar
- ___ 4. very similar
- ___ 5. the same

time since the last PCS are discussed thoroughly in Shaw et al. (1983b) and will not be repeated in this report. Note that time since last PCS was measured originally in "number of months" but was converted to "number of weeks" (months x 4) for use in the present analyses.

Issue 3: Measures

Two measures were obtained relevant to Issue 3. The first was the item "When were you notified that you would be making your upcoming Permanent Change of Station?" A notice time score was derived by computing the number of months between the time notice was given and the departure date. Additionally, individuals were asked how much notice time a person should be given prior to a PCS.

Issue 4: Measures

Several open-ended questions were asked which required individuals to discuss those factors which affected their attitude towards making their next PCS and also to discuss factors which related more generally to the ease or difficulty of making transfers. These items are presented in Table 4.

Issue 5: Measures

One open-ended item, "What factors made your present job assignment a good or poor match with your ideal military job assignment?" was used to examine the factors which related to satisfaction with job assignments. Additionally, a measure of the degree of match between an individual's present job assignment and ideal job assignment was obtained using the following question "When you were told that you would be assigned to your

Table 4

Open-Ended Questions Concerning
Attitude Toward And Ease/Difficulty
of Making PCS moves

1. Would you say that your transfer experiences have had a positive or negative effect upon your attitudes and judgments about the U.S. Air Force? Explain.
2. What have you learned from making PCS moves that has been helpful in making transfers easier for you and/or your family?
3. Is it getting easier, harder, or about the same for you and your family to move as time goes on? Explain.
4. What could the USAF do early in a person's career, when that person has to PCS, to help that person adjust better to transfers later in their career?
5. What could the USAF do during any transfer to make the transfer easier?
6. What factors contributed to the ease or difficulty of you and your family's adjustment to the community in your present assignment? Please specify which factors were most important to yourself, your spouse, and your children.
7. What factors contributed to your reluctance or eagerness to make the move to your present assignment?
8. What factors contributed to your reluctance or eagerness to move from your present assignment to the new assignment?
9. We are interested in how people perceive the gains and losses associated with moving. What would you say are the main things you'll lose by moving, the things you'll miss the most that you have here but won't have there?
10. What are the gains you expect to get from making the move? What do you look forward to at the new location that will be better than here?

present job assignment, would you say that this job was:" Responses were made on a 5 point fixed response scale (1 = a very poor match with my ideal and 5 = a very good match with my ideal).

Issue 6: Measures

Two fixed response items were used to measure the degree to which individuals felt that they "knew what to expect" about their next PCS assignment. These items are presented below.

Do you feel that you know "what to expect" concerning your job in your new assignment?

- ☐ 1. I have no idea of what to expect
- ☐ 2. I have a little idea of what to expect
- ☐ 3. I have some idea of what to expect
- ☐ 4. I know what to expect
- ☐ 5. I know exactly what to expect

Do you feel you know "what to expect" about the new base or community?

- ☐ 1. I have no idea of what to expect
- ☐ 2. I have a little idea of what to expect
- ☐ 3. I have some idea of what to expect
- ☐ 4. I know what to expect
- ☐ 5. I know exactly what to expect

Additionally, individuals were asked using an open-ended item "where did you get this information?" A total "knows what to expect" score was derived by simply summing the responses to the two fixed-response items.

Results

Descriptive statistics, and correlational and regression analyses were computed to examine the six major issues described in the introduction. All responses to open-ended questions were first transcribed to index cards (one statement per card per question) and then statements relating to a specific question were content analyzed to determine meaningful response

categories. Individual respondents were then assigned category "codes" depending on whether their statements represented each of the categories associated with a particular question, and whether the category was mentioned as a "plus" or a "negative" aspect. For example, suppose that three categories were derived from the content analysis of statements made to the question, "What factors contributed to your reluctance or eagerness to move from your present assignment to the new assignment?" The categories derived were: (1) the adventure of travel, (2) family stability, and (3) USAF "bureaucratic" procedures. Suppose an individual responded to that question by saying "I'm really looking forward to traveling in Europe, but all the paper work you have to go through when you transfer is a real pain!" For category #1, adventure of travel, this individual would have received a code of 2 indicating that he mentioned that category in his statements and that it contributed to his eagerness to make the PCS. He would have received a code 9 for category #2, family stability since he did not mention that category in his statements. Finally he would have received a category code of 1 for category #3, bureaucratic procedures, since he mentioned the category as being a negative contribution to PCS attitude. Thus, each person in the sample would receive three scores to the question concerning reluctance/eagerness factors, i.e. one code (0 - did not mention; 1 - mentioned as negative; 2 - mentioned as plus) for each of three distinct response categories. Frequency data concerning the number of individuals who responded to questions in particular ways were obtained and the analysis of such data is

presented extensively in this results section.

Issue 1: Career Intent, Intent to Reenlist, USAF Satisfaction And Attitude
Toward Future Moves

Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between eleven major independent variables and career intent, intent to reenlist, USAF satisfaction and attitude toward future moves. Several of the independent variables were measured using multiple items. The results of the correlation analysis of these data are presented in Table 5. The intent of the individuals in our sample to make the USAF a career was significantly and positively correlated ($p \leq .05$) with five of the independent variables: (1) total number of career transfers, (2) perceived advancement, (3) overall match of the present assignment with an ideal assignment, (4) overall expected match of the next assignment to an ideal and (5) overall expected satisfaction with the next assignment. Three variables correlated significantly ($p \leq .05$) with intent to reenlist: (1) total number of career transfers, (2) number of days TDY and (3) attitude toward move to the present assignment. Overall satisfaction with the USAF was significantly ($p \leq .05$) and positively correlated with overall match of present assignment to an ideal assignment and expected satisfaction with the next assignment, and negatively correlated with notice time given before transfer. Finally, ten independent variable items correlated significantly with attitude toward future moves: (1) total number of career transfers (-), (2) days TDY during the last 12 months (+), (3) perceived advancement (-), (4) overall expected match of the next

Table 5

Correlations of Major Independent Variables
With Intent to Make The USAF A Career, Intent To Reenlist,
Overall USAF Satisfaction And Attitude Toward Future Transfers

	<u>Career Intent</u>	<u>Intent to USAF Reenlist</u>	<u>USAF Satisfaction</u>	<u>Attitude Toward Future Transfers</u>
<u>Overall Similarity of</u>				
Present Assignment To Next	-	-	+.15+	-
<u>Transfer Frequency</u>				
Total Career Transfers	+.31***	-.20*	-	-.23**
Average # of Months per Transfer	-	-	-	-
Time Since Last PCS	-	-	-	-
Days TDY During Last 12 months	-	+.18*	-	.18*
# of TDY Assignments Last 12 months	-	-	-	-
<u>Perceived Advancement:</u>				
	+.21*	-	-	+.22*
<u>Attractiveness of Present Assignment</u>				
Overall match of Assignment with Ideal	+.24***	-	+.22*	-.16+
Overall satisfaction with Assignment	+.16+	-	-	-
<u>Attractiveness of Next Assignment:</u>				
Overall Expected Match of Assignment To Ideal	+.17*	-	+.16+	.18*
Overall Expected Satisfaction with Assignment	+.18*	-	+.23**	.27**
<u>Past Transfer Adjustment Success:</u>				
Rated Family Adjustment Difficulty	-	-	-	-
Rated Personal Adjustment Difficulty	-	-	+.15+	.19*
# of Weeks Needed For Personal Adjustment	-	-	-.15+	-.17*

Table 5 (cont.)

	<u>Career Intent</u>	<u>Intent To USAF Reenlist</u>	<u>Satisfaction</u>	<u>Attitude Toward Future Transfers</u>
<u>Notice Time Given Prior To Transfer</u>	-	-	-.31***	-
<u>Ration Of Preferred Assignments To Total # of Career Transfers</u>	-	-	-	.35***
<u>Attitude Toward Moving To Present Assignment</u>	-	.20*	-	-
<u>Attitude Toward Moving To Next Assignment</u>	-	-	-	.40***
<u>Perceived Gain/Loss Ratio In Move To Next Assignment</u>	-	-	-	.21*

1Only correlations significant at $p \leq .10$ are reported. Because of missing data for some variables, sample sizes for individual variable pairs ranged from 86 to 143.

+ $p < .10$
 * $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$
 *** $p < .001$

assignment to an ideal (+), (5) overall expected satisfaction with next assignment (+), (6) rated personal adjustment difficulty in present assignment (+), (7) number of weeks needed from personal adjustment in present assignment (-), (8) ratio of preferred assignments to total number of career transfers (+), (9) attitude toward move to next assignment (+), and (10) perceived gain/loss ration in move to next assignment (+).

Stepwise regression analyses were conducted for each of the four dependent variables to examine the overall predictive power of various sets of independent variables. For each dependent variable, those items of the independent variables constructs which correlated at least at a $p \leq .10$ level were included in the stepwise analysis. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 6. Multiple R's ranged from .41 (career intent) to .51 (attitude toward future moves). We were able to account for anywhere from 17% of the variance (career intent) to 26% of the variance (future moves) in our dependent variables.

Issue 2: Amount Of "Profitable" vs. "Adjustment Time" In Transfers

Individuals responded to questions concerning the number of weeks it took them to "get up to speed," "adjust to their co-workers," and "adjust to the technical aspects of their job" in their present assignment. Additionally, an index was available as to how long they had been at their present assignment. A "percent of time needed to adjust" score was derived by dividing each of the adjustment indexes by the time in present assignment. The means for each of these variables are presented in Table 7.

Table 6

Results of Regression Analyses
Used to Predict Career Intent,
Intent to Reenlist, Overall USAF
Satisfaction And Attitude Toward Future Transfers

	<u>R</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>F*</u>
<u>I. Dependent Variable: Intent To Make USAF A Career</u>				
Independent Variables-				
Total # of Career Transfers	.30	.09	.27	9.97
Perceived Advancement	.37	.14	.16	3.16
Match of Present Assignment To Ideal	.41	.17	.18	4.32
<u>II. Dependent Variable: Intent To Reenlist</u>				
Independent Variables-				
Attitude Toward Move To Present Assignment	.21	.04	.19	4.69
Total # of Career Transfers	.27	.08	-.16	3.53
Number of Days TDY For Last 12 Months	.32	.10	.16	3.48
<u>III. Dependent Variable: Overall USAF Satisfaction</u>				
Independent Variables-				
Notice Time Given Prior To Transfer	.36	.13	-.33	14.38
Overall Expected Satisfaction With Next Assignment	.41	.17	.21	3.95
Match of Present Assignment To Ideal	.45	.20	.15	3.36
<u>IV. Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward Future Transfers</u>				
Independent Variables-				
Ratio Of Preferred Assignments To Total # of Career Transfers	.40	.16	.31	10.73
Attitude Toward Move To Next Assignment	.48	.23	.29	8.98
Total # Of Career Transfers	.51	.26	-.16	3.27

*All independent variables listed added significantly to the regression equation at $p \leq .05$.

Table 7

Mean Job Adjustment Time in Weeks and Percent of
Total Time Spent Adjusting For Total Sample, For
High/Low Total Career PCS And For High/Low Job Similarity Subgroups¹

	<u>Total Sample</u>	<u>Low PCS Frequency</u>	<u>High PCS Frequency</u>	<u>Low Similarity</u>	<u>High Similarity</u>
1. Up To Speed ²	23.27 .16 145.40	31.79 .22 144.50	16.64 .12 138.70	31.57 .22 143.50	13.23 .10 132.30
2. Co-Workers	11.34 .07 162.00	14.43 .08 180.40	6.75 .05 135.00	14.77 .08 184.60	5.27 .04 131.70
3. Job	17.39 .11 158.10	22.93 .16 143.30	9.16 .07 131.00	24.86 .16 155.40	8.93 .06 148.80

¹All data are expressed in terms of number of weeks
Low PCS Frequency = individuals with 4 or less transfers
High PCS Frequency = individuals with 7 or more transfers
Low Similarity = individuals who rated their previous and present jobs as
"not similar at all"
High Similarity = individuals who rated their previous and present jobs as
"similar" to "very similar"

²the first number is the number of weeks to adjust, the second number is
the percent of time needed to adjust, and the third number is the average
time spent in the last PCS for individuals in the particular sample.
Dependeing on the variable in question sample sizes range from:

Total sample, n = 133-135
Low PCS, n = 48-54
High PCS, n = 56-59
Low Similarity, n = 62-65
High Similarity, n = 43-44

In addition, the sample was divided into Low/High PCS Frequency subsamples, and also into Low/High similarity of present job to previous job subsamples. A definition of these groups is given at the bottom of Table 7. Overall, respondents spent 23.27 weeks or 16% of their assignment time getting "up to speed" in their present assignment. They spent only 11.34 weeks (7%) of their time adjusting to co-workers and 17.39 (11%) weeks adjusting to the technical aspects of their job.

As one might expect, individuals who had moved often required less time to get adjusted to their assignment. Analysis of variance procedures indicated that Low PCS Frequency individuals utilized a significantly greater percent of their assignment time getting up to speed and adjusting to the technical aspects of their job than did High PCS Frequency individuals ($F_{1,102} = 5.81, p \leq .05$ for "getting up to speed" and $F_{1,102} = 9.71, p \leq .01$ for adjusting to technical aspects of the job).

When comparing the high and low job similarity groups, a similar pattern was indicated. Individuals whose jobs in their present assignment were very different (low similarity) to what they had done previously required a higher percentage of their assignment time than did high similarity individuals to get up to speed ($F_{1,103} = 8.53, p \leq .01$), to adjust to the technical aspects of their job ($F_{1,103} = 8.79, p < .01$) and a marginally greater percent of time to adjust to their co-workers ($F_{1,103} = 3.17, p < .08$). These data indicate that both number of career transfers and the extent to which transfers are made to similar or dissimilar jobs greatly effects the amount of "profitable" time an individual is able to

spend in the assignment. It is important to note that while the low PCS/high PCS and low similarity/high similarity groups varied considerably in the time needed to adjust to their present job situation, in the case of getting up to speed and adjusting to the technical aspects of the job no significant differences were found between the groups in terms of the total amount of time they spent in their present assignment

Issue 3: Notice Time Given/Needed

Individuals responded to questions concerning the amount of notice time they were given prior to making their transfer and the amount of time they felt was ideal to adequately prepare for a transfer. The mean notice time given to individuals in the sample was 3.8 months with a standard deviation of 1.8 months. Respondents indicated, on the average, that 6 months were actually needed to prepare for a transfer ($SD = 2.2$). In responding to the question concerning the number of months notice that should be given, a small number of our sample indicated that notice time depended on where the transfer was to be made. For overseas assignments 5.7 months ($SD = 3.5$) were needed. For Conus assignments only an average of 4.2 months ($SD = 1.8$) were needed, and for married individuals regardless of where the assignment was, 6.6 months ($SD = .89$) were needed.

Issue 4: Factors Which Relate To Transfer Attitude/Ease

Ten questions relating to the ease/difficulty of making PCS moves and the factors which affected attitudes towards the transfers were included in this study. As described earlier, responses to each item were used to develop a categorization system for each of the ten questions. Individuals

responses were then coded based upon the categories relevant to each question. Frequency data based upon this coding procedure for each of the ten questions in the study are presented in Table 8. The percentages shown in Table 8 are based on the percent of 143 respondents who answered in each category. Since some individuals gave more than one answer, the percents do not add up to 100.

Question I asked how all of the individual's transfer experience had affected his attitude toward the Air Force, and what specific aspects of transferring had produced this positive or negative effect. Positive comments outnumbered negative comments, with the adventure of travel and being assigned to one's base of preference being mentioned as the most frequent pluses. When transfer had a negative effect on attitudes, the most common reasons were problems with the USAF bureaucracy, problems with family stability, financial loss, and not being assigned to a preferred location. Question II concerned the things which people learned as they made transfers which helped make future transfers easier. Of the total sample, 43.4% indicated that they had learned to be organized and plan ahead, 21.0% had learned the importance of financial planning, and 23.1% indicated that learning what to take/what to leave during a transfer had made their transfer experiences easier as time went along. In response to Question III, our sample indicated that the disposition of household belongings and the effect of transfers on family/social stability were the primary factors in making transfers harder as time went along, while simple experience gained in moving helped to ease the transfer process over the years.

Table 8

Analysis of Total Sample Frequency
Data On Responses to Open-Ended Questions
Related To Ease Of Moving/Reluctance to Move

I. Question: Would you say that your transfer experiences have had a positive or negative effect upon your attitudes and judgments about the U.S. Air Force?

	Had A Positive Effect		Had A Negative Effect	
	f	%	f	%
1. Transfers were an adventure	59	41.3	2	1.4
2. Assignment to Base of Preference	23	16.1	11	7.7
3. Procedures of/Information From USAF "Bureaucracy"	2	1.4	12	8.4
4. Effect Upon Family/Social Stability	7	4.9	17	11.9
5. Effect on Financial Situation	1	0.7	12	8.4
6. Frequency of Moves	8	5.6	6	4.2
7. Nature of Job At Assignment	8	5.6	7	4.9
8. Disposition of Personal Belongings	1	0.7	3	2.1

II Question: What have you learned from making PCS moves that has been helpful in making transfers easier for you and/or your family?

	Mentioned This Category	
	f	%
1. Try To Avoid Transfers	3	2.1
2. Be Organized/Plan Ahead	62	43.4
3. Do All Paperwork/Moving Yourself	24	16.8
4. Plan Financially For The Move	30	21.0
5. Get Information	26	18.2
6. Make Plans For Family	13	9.1
7. Be Psychologically Flexible	21	14.7
8. Be Prepared For Temporary Limits	3	2.1
9. Learn What To Take What To Leave	33	23.1

Table 8 (cont.)

III Question: Is it getting easier or harder or about the same for you and your family to move as time goes on? Why?

	Harder		Same		Easier		Easier/Harder Not Indicated	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Household belongings	20	14.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
2. Experience In Moving	1	0.7	1	.7	34	23.8	0	0
3. Effects on Financial Situation	5	3.5	1	.7	7	4.9	1	.7
4. New Experiences	0	0.0	1	.7	3	2.1	1	.7
5. U.S. Air Force Procedures	4	2.8	0	0	5	3.5	1	.7
6. Retirement Issues	6	4.2	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
7. Effect on Family/Social Stability	53	37.1	1	.7	12	8.4	0	0

IV Question: What could the U.S. Air Force do early in a person's career, when that person has to PCS, to help that person adjust better to transfers later in their careers?

	Mentioned This Category	
	f	%
1. Give BOP/Close To Home/No Remotes	25	17.5
2. Give Then The "Big Picture"	14	9.8
3. Improve CBPO Procedures	8	5.6
4. Reduce Transfer Frequency	3	2.1
5. Don't "Pamper" Them Early	4	2.8
6. Help Financially	23	16.1
7. Improve Housing Procedures	3	2.1
8. Give Them More Information	53	37.1
9. Give More Notice Time	12	8.4
10. Improve Shipping Allowances/ Procedures	8	5.6
11. More Supervisor Involvement In New Place	6	4.2

V Question: What could the USAF do during the transfer to make the transfer easier?

	Mentioned This Category	
	f	%
1. Give Base of Preference	2	1.4
2. Give More Consideration Of Family Issues	7	4.9
3. Distribute Moves Across Whole Year	5	3.5

Table 8 (cont.)

	<u>Mentioned This Category</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
4. Don't Reverse/Change PCS Decision	5	3.5
5. Increase Financial Reimbursements	35	24.5
6. Arrange Housing For Newcomer	15	10.5
7. More/Better Information	27	18.9
8. Centralize/Increase Efficiency of Procedures	15	10.5
9. More Weight Allowance/Less Damage	26	18.2
10. Change Timing/Frequency of Moves	12	8.4
11. Be More Flexible on Travel To New Place	4	2.8

VI Question: What factors contributed to the ease or difficulty of you and your family's adjustment to the community in your present assignment?

	<u>Made Difficult</u>		<u>Made Easy</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Availability of Activities	1	0.7	8	5.6
2. Base of Preference	5	3.5	5	3.5
3. Bureaucratic Procedures	3	2.1	3	2.1
4. Child Adjustment	8	5.6	5	3.5
5. Climate	6	4.2	1	0.7
6. Co-Workers	3	2.1	13	9.1
7. Cultural Differences	13	9.1	2	1.4
8. Delay in Arrival of Furniture	6	4.2	1	0.7
9. Familiar With Area	11	7.7	42	29.4
10. Financial Issues	0	0.0	21	14.7
11. Friends/Activities At Old Assignment	6	4.2	2	1.4
12. Housing	24	16.8	11	7.7
13. Job	8	5.6	10	7.0
14. Medical Problems	5	3.5	1	0.7
15. Personal Characteristic	2	1.4	16	11.2
16. Wife's Adjustment	18	12.6	1	0.7
17. Wife's Job	6	4.2	3	2.1
18. USAF Social Network	2	1.4	5	3.5
19. Sponsor Program	2	1.4	6	4.2

Table 8 (cont.)

VII Question: What factors contributed to your reluctance or eagerness to make the move to your present location?

	Made Reluctant		Made Eager	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Ability To Do/Preference For Job	10	7.0	9	6.3
2. Attractiveness Of New Place	30	21.0	31	21.7
3. Attractiveness Of Previous Place	12	8.4	9	6.3
4. Climate Of New Place	2	1.4	9	6.3
5. Educational Opportunities	0	0.0	5	3.5
6. Proximity To Family/Friends	3	2.1	26	18.2
7. Humanitarian Reasons	1	0.7	5	3.5
8. Just Moving	0	0.0	8	5.6
9. New What To Expect	10	7.0	7	4.9
10. Overseas	1	0.7	13	9.1
11. Responsibility/Challenge In Job	1	0.7	11	7.7

VIII Question: What factor contributed to your reluctance or eagerness to move from your present assignment to the new assignment?

	Made Reluctant		Made Eager	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Adventure	1	0.7	29	20.3
2. Attitude Toward Place: Been There	1	0.7	14	9.8
3. Attitude Toward Place: Not Been There	3	2.1	7	4.9
4. Base of Preference	2	1.4	7	4.9
5. Wants A Change	1	0.7	14	9.8
6. Control Over Decision To Move	4	2.8	0	0.0
7. Financial Issues	6	4.2	4	2.8
8. Get Away From Present Assignment	1	0.7	7	4.9
9. Climate	2	1.4	4	2.8
10. Housing	3	2.1	1	0.7
11. Knows/Doesn't Know What To Expect	5	3.5	8	5.6
12. Leave Family	10	7.0	0	0.0
13. Personal Problems	4	2.8	3	2.1
14. Preference For/Ability To Do Job	1	0.7	30	21.0
15. Proximity To Family/Friends	0	0.0	12	8.4
16. Recreational Activities	0	0.0	2	1.4
17. Responsibility/Challenge Of Job	0	0.0	9	6.3
18. Retirement Issues	2	1.4	2	1.4
19. Sets Up Next Assignment	0	0.0	10	7.0
20. Uprooting	13	9.1	0	0.0

Table 8 (cont.)

IX Question: We are interested in how people perceive the gains and losses associated with moving. What would you say are the main things you'll lose by moving, the things you'll miss the most that you have but won't have there?

	<u>Mentioned This Category</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. American Culture	18	12.6
2. Climate	4	2.8
3. Community Activities	4	2.8
4. Damage To Personal Belongings	3	2.1
5. Educational Opportunities	9	6.3
6. Family	36	25.2
7. Stability	9	6.3
8. Financial Loss	47	32.9
9. Friends	48	33.6
10. Hobbies	5	3.5
11. My Home	12	8.4
12. Present Job	8	5.6
13. Material Goods	26	18.2
14. Shopping/Restaurants	13	9.1
15. Travel Freedom	4	2.8

X Question: What are the gains you expect to get from making the move? What do you look forward to at the new location that will be better than here?

	<u>Mentioned This Category</u>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Base of Preference	5	3.5
2. Brings Family Closer Together (Emotionally)	6	4.2
3. Change of Pace	6	4.2
4. Climate	5	3.5
5. Educational Opportunities	7	4.9
6. Financial Gains	13	9.1
7. Friends	26	18.2
8. Job	44	30.8
9. Proximity To Family	11	7.7
10. Community/Recreational Activities	13	9.1
11. Sets Up Next PCS	6	4.2
12. Specific Items To Purchase	11	7.7
13. Travel	68	47.6
14. Nothing	14	9.8

Question IV dealt with what could the USAF do early in a persons career to make transfers easier then and later. Of our total sample, 37.1% indicated that more information should be provided to young transferees, 17.5% suggested that early transfers should be to a base of preference and not to a remote station, while 16.1% indicated than greater financial help in early transfers was needed.

In response to Question V, which asked what could be done to make any transfer easier, only 1.4% of the sample mentioned giving individuals their base of preference. As in Question IV, more information (18.9%) and more financial help (24.5%) were indicated as important facilitating factors in transfers as was increasing the weight allowance for personal goods (18.2).

Question VI asked respondents to indicated what factors contributed to the ease or difficulty of their own and their family's adjustment to the community when they moved to their present assignment. Housing (16.8%) was the most frequently mentioned difficulty, followed by problems with their wife's adjustment (12.6%) and cultural differences (9.1%). Prior familiarity with the area was the factor most frequently associated with ease of adjustment (29.4%), followed by financial issues (14.7%) and personal characteristics (11.2%).

Question VII concerned those factors which contributed to the respondent's eagerness or reluctance to move to their present assignment. Attractiveness/unattractiveness of the present assignment was mentioned essentially equally as a factor contributing to the reluctance (21.0%) and eagerness (21.7%) of individuals. No other factor was mentioned by more

than 10% of the sample as contributing to reluctance. Proximity to family/friends was mentioned by 18.2% of the sample as a primary determinant of their eagerness to move to their present assignment.

Question VIII was identical to Question VII except that it asked about factors which affected attitudes about the upcoming move. A wide variety of factors were mentioned as contributing to reluctance, but no single factor was mentioned by more than 10% of the sample. Interestingly, the most frequent factor which affected eagerness to move was the individual's preference for/ability to do the job they would hold in the next assignment. This was mentioned by 21.0% of the sample. "Adventure" was the second most frequently cited factor contributing to eagerness to move (20.3%).

Question IX examined the losses individuals perceived would be associated with their move to the next assignment. Friends (33.6%), financial losses (32.9%) and family (25.2%) were the most frequently cited losses. For individuals going overseas, the American culture was a significant loss (12.6%). The loss of material goods through sale or damage was also mentioned frequently (18.2%).

Question X looked at the gains people perceived as associated with their next move. Travel opportunities were mentioned by 47.6% of the sample, 30.8% cited job-related gains, and 18.2% of the sample mentioned the gain of new friends or the regaining of old acquaintances.

In addition to an analysis of responses to these ten questions for the total sample, data on the overall reluctance/eagerness of individuals to

their next PCS and the total number of career transfers they had experienced were used to form subgroups. Using scores on items related to PCS attitude, respondents were classified as either reluctant to move (bottom 40% of scores) or eager to move (top 40% of scores). Respondents were also classified as either having had few career transfers (Low PCS Frequency ≤ 4 transfers) or many career transfers (High PCS Frequency ≥ 7 transfers). Subgroup frequency analyses were conducted for those groups on questions VIII, IX and X. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 9. Notice that in some cases, categories used earlier in the analysis of total sample frequencies were collapsed to form more "macro" categories consisting of similar responses.

For Question VIII, individuals who were eager to move cited adventure and a desire for change and job-related issues more frequently than reluctant individuals. Leaving family/friends was cited more often by respondents who were reluctant to move. High PCS Frequency individuals cited adventure/change as affecting their attitudes toward PCS more frequently than the Low PCS Frequency individuals. The reverse was true for job-related issues.

Concerning Question IX and the losses they would experience as a result of their transfer, respondents in the "reluctant" subgroups cited culture/climate/activities, and family/stability more frequently than individuals who were eager to move. Damage to household goods and financial loss were mentioned more frequently as a significant loss by those eager to move than by those who were reluctant. In terms of Low vs.

Table 9

Analysis of Split Sample¹ Data on
Responses To Three Open-Ended Questions
Related To Reluctance/Eagerness To Move

VIII Question: What factors contributed to your reluctance or eagerness to move from your present assignment to the new assignment?

	<u>Reluctant</u>	<u>Eager</u>	<u>Low PCS</u>	<u>High PCS</u>
1. Adventure/Change ²	9	21	15	24
2. Attitude Toward Place ³	8	10	8	12
3. Base Of Preference	2	5	3	2
4. Climate	3	3	3	2
5. Control Over Decision	3	0	2	1
6. Financial Issues	5	3	6	2
7. Get Away From Present Assignment	3	4	3	3
8. Housing	1	2	1	1
9. Knows/Doesn't Know What To Expect	6	5	5	4
10. Leave Family/Friends ⁴	18	9	11	16
11. Personal Problems	6	1	3	2
12. Job Related Issues ⁵	10	21	16	11
13. Recreational Activities	0	2	0	2
14. Retirement Issues	2	2	1	3
15. Sets Up Next Assignment	4	3	6	4

IX Question: What would you say are the main things you'll lose by moving, the things that you'll miss the most that you have here but won't have there?

1. Culture/Climate Activities ⁶	13	6	12	9
2. Damage/Financial Loss ⁷	15	24	17	26
3. Educational Opportunities	5	3	3	4
4. Family Stability ⁸	26	12	24	15

Table 9 (cont.)

	<u>Reluctant</u>	<u>Eager</u>	<u>Low PCS</u>	<u>High PCS</u>
5. Friends	16	19	23	16
6. Hobbies	2	1	1	3
7. My Home	8	3	5	3
8. Present Job	2	4	4	2
9. Material Goods	11	11	10	11
10. Shopping/Restaurants	6	3	4	6
11. Travel Freedom	3	1	1	1

X Question: What are the gains you expect to get from making the move? What do you look forward to at the new location that will be better than here?

1. Base of Preference	1	3	2	0
2. Brings Family Closer Together (Emotionally)	0	6	3	3
3. Change of Pace	2	4	1	5
4. Climate	2	3	2	1
5. Educational Opportunities	0	5	3	2
6. Financial Gains	4	3	4	7
7. Friends	8	14	11	8
8. Job	11	21	19	16
9. Proximity To Family	5	3	4	7
10. Community/Recreational Activities	4	6	4	6
11. Sets up Next PCS	4	2	2	2
12. Specific Items To Purchase	5	3	4	4
13. Travel	20	31	24	28
14. Nothing	8	12	6	12

Table 9 (cont.)

¹Relevant = those individuals whose scores on the reluctance to move to next assignment measure was $\leq .33$.

Eager = those individuals whose scores were $\geq .37$.

Low PCS = those individuals with ≤ 4 career moves.

High PCS = those individuals with ≥ 7 career moves.

²This category combines categories 1 and 5 in Table 8, Question VIII.

³This category combines categories 2 and 3 in Table 8, Question VIII.

⁴This category combines categories 12, 15, and 20 in Table 8, Question VIII.

⁵This category combines categories 14 and 17 in Table 8, Question VIII.

⁶This category combines categories 1, 2 and 3 in Table 8, Question IX.

⁷This category combines categories 4 and 8 in Table 8, Question IX.

⁸This category combines categories 6 and 7 in Table 8, Question IX.

High PCS Frequency group differences, High PCS Frequency individuals cited damage to goods and financial loss more often as losses than Low PCS group members. The reverse was true for family stability.

Finally, on Question X, which concerned the gains people perceived as associated with their next move, only two factors seemed to separate the eager vs. reluctant groups. Job and travel were more often seen as gains by eager to move individuals than by those who were reluctant to move. For High and Low PCS groups, no categories showed marked differences between the two groups.

Issue 5: Factors Associated With An Ideal Job

Due to the importance which the job seems to play in determining PCS attitude, an analysis was made of an open-ended survey item which asked individuals to discuss the factors which made a job a good or poor match with their ideal. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 10. The most frequently mentioned factor associated with the job being either a good or poor match was autonomy/responsibility/challenge (25.2%). This was followed by "fits career field" (18.9%) and "qualifications" (14.7%). The importance of these three factors were essentially the same regardless of whether they were mentioned as the cause of a job being a good match with the individual's ideal or the cause of it being a bad match with the ideal.

Issue 6: Expectations And Reluctance To Transfer

As discussed earlier, a score was derived concerning the extent to which an individual "knew what to expect" about his community and job prior to actually making the transfer. The correlation between this score and

Table 10

Analysis Of Total Sample
Responses to Job-Match-To-Ideal Question

Question: What factors made your present job assignment a good or poor match with your ideal military job assignment?

	Poor Match With Ideal	Good Match With Ideal	Total	
	<u>f</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Autonomy/Responsibility/Challenge	13	23	36	25.2
2. Co-workers	2	8	10	7.0
3. Fits Career Field	10	17	27	18.9
4. Interact with/Help People	3	9	12	8.4
5. Workload (overloaded and underloaded)	2	0	2	1.4
6. Learn From Job	4	2	6	4.2
7. Qualifications	13	8	21	14.7
8. Job Prestige	0	6	6	4.2
9. Repetitiveness of Work	3	2	5	3.5
10. Task Identity	1	4	5	3.5

the upcoming transfer was computed. A significant relationship was found ($r = .29, p \leq .001$).

Since the extent of prior knowledge about the transfer location did relate significantly to PCS attitude, an analysis was made of an open-ended survey item which asked respondents to indicate from whom they got information about the transfer assignment. In addition to analysis of the total sample, two subgroups were formed based upon the extent of their knowledge about the transfer assignment. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 11. An explanation of how the subgroups were formed is found in a footnote in Table 11.

The most frequently cited source of information was the USAF sponsor (55.2%) followed by "been there before" (28.7%), people who've been to the new location (24.5%) and people at the new location (20.3%). Interesting to note is that, although the sponsor is cited most frequently as a source of information, that information does not seem to be the significant determiner of who knows what to expect and who does not know what to expect about the new assignment.

Discussion

Six major issues were addressed in this report and the analyses included within it. Implications of these results for personnel policy and future research are discussed in the following pages.

Issue 1: Career Intent, Intent To Reenlist, USAF Satisfaction And Attitude Toward Future Moves

In our introduction, we asked the question of whether factors related

Table 11

Analysis of Total Sample And Split-Sample¹
Responses To An Open-Ended Question
Concerning Sources Of Transfer Information

	<u>Total Sample</u>		<u>Knew What To Expect</u>	<u>Did Not Know What To Expect</u>
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>f</u>
1. Been There Before	41	28.7	28	2
2. Family Services	12	8.4	2	4
3. New Base Commander/Boss	5	3.5	2	0
4. People At New Location	29	20.3	12	7
5. People Who've Been To New Location	35	24.5	13	6
6. Reading	9	6.3	2	2
7. Realtors	7	4.9	3	0
8. Sponsor	79	55.2	24	22

¹Sample was divided into top 40%, middle 20%, bottom 40% in terms of their responses to two items relating to whether they knew "what to expect" about their job and community in the new location. A score on the two items was derived by simply summing the responses of the two items. The middle 20% of the total sample was excluded from the analysis and that is why the two frequencies ("knew" - "did not know") do not sum to the total sample frequency.

to PCS attitudes also relate to broader attitudinal issues relevant to the USAF. The results of the correlational and regression analyses conducted in this study would seem to answer that question in the affirmative.

Career Intent. As one would expect, total number of career transfers proved to be the strongest predictor of intention to make the USAF a career. Two factors are probably operating here. First, although our sampling procedure attempted to minimize the correlation between number of transfers and length of military service, these two variables were strongly related to one another. Thus individuals who had made many transfers were also individuals who had already committed several years of their lives to USAF service, and would be unlikely to leave the USAF to pursue other career paths. A second factor operating may well have been that suggested by Edstrom and Galbraith (1977). They argued that frequent transfers tend to increase the commitment of individuals to the organization, since the organization is one of the few things that remain constant throughout the individual's life. Frequent transfers keep one from developing a strong loyalty to a particular place or set of people, while the organization is one of the few stable factors to which commitment can develop.

In addition to number of career transfers, the regression analysis showed that perceived advancement was a significant predictor of career intent. This is logical, since a person's desire to remain in a particular career field will be affected by the extent to which the individual perceives himself making progress in that career. Similarly, a third predictor of career intent was the overall match of the present assignment

to an ideal. Not only is the individual affected by whether he is progressing in his career, but also by whether that career is consistent with his ideal job situation.

Intent to reenlist. Attitude toward the move to the present assignment was the strongest predictor of intent to reenlist. This indicates some lasting effect upon intent to remain in the USAF of the individual's past transfer experience. Total number of career transfers was the second predictor in the equation. Oddly enough, the beta weight for this variable is negative, i.e. the more career transfers, the less likely to reenlist. Considering the positive relationship between total career transfers and intent to make the USAF a career, this is a perplexing finding. One possible explanation might be that, although individuals who were retiring after this enlistment had been excluded from the analysis, other individuals who were advanced in their USAF tenure were included. These individuals may have been "extending" their enlistment but not "retiring". Confusion over the item's interpretation may be the cause of this unusual negative correlation. Additionally, some of the respondents may simply not have read the item all the way through, and marked the "retiring" response. Finally, total number of days TDY during the past 12 months was the third significant predictor of intent to reenlist. This may well relate to the notion that frequent moves (in this case temporary moves) are related to increased commitment on the part of the individual since the USAF is one of the few things consistent in his life. Additionally, individuals who are not highly committed to USAF life may self-select out of situations of high TDY. Thus, ratings of high levels of TDY were made by individuals who were generally committed to the USAF and thus more likely to reenlist.

USAF Satisfaction. Among members of our sample, the strongest predictor of overall USAF satisfaction was the amount of notice time given prior to actual transfer. Oddly enough, this relationship was negative in direction. This is reverse to what one would expect. We may have here a situation where individuals who received little notice time were "use to it," generally accepted this short notice and were nevertheless satisfied with the USAF. The second and third predictors of USAF satisfaction, i.e. overall expected satisfaction with their next assignment and the extent of match between their present assignment and an ideal, are relatively easy to explain. They deal with the extent to which the USAF has met their desire in terms of assignments and is meeting their desires in future assignments.

Attitude toward future moves. The strongest predictor of attitude toward future moves was the ratio of preferred assignments to total career assignments. Individuals who have had a high preferred/total transfer ratio would be likely to expect that the probability of getting future desirable assignments is good. Their attitude toward future moves would be positive. The reverse would be true for individuals with a low preferred/total ratio. The second predictor in the regression equation, attitude toward moving to next assignment, would indicate that the present transfer situation has an effect on attitude toward future moves independent of the total transfer history. The fact that total number of career transfers received a negative weight in the prediction equation is consistent with Seidenberg's (1973) suggestion that too many transfers result in "transfer burnout." Individuals get to the point where they just

can not picture themselves moving another time.

Issue 2: Amount Of "Profitable" vs. "Adjustment Time" In Transfers

Perhaps one of the most important practical implications for personnel policy that can be derived from the present study comes from our analysis of adjustment time required in transfer situations. When we examine the difference between individuals who made transfers to very different job situations and those who transferred to similar job situations, we note a marked contrast in the amount of time and percent of total time in their assignment that it took them to adjust to and get "up to speed" in their job. Individuals in low similarity job situations spent 22% of their time (31.6 weeks) just getting "up to speed" in their job, while personnel in high similarity situations spent only 10% (12.2 weeks). This indicates a very significant loss of "profitable time" to the USAF for the low job similarity individuals. One implication might be that, when individuals move to dissimilar job situations, the tenure of the individual in that assignment should be increased, so that the percent of profitable time in the assignment could be increased, more or less allowing the individual to pay back their training time. Research using task inventory or other structured job analysis techniques might well allow the USAF to determine the degree of job similarity across transfer locations and adjust total assignment duration to enhance the amount of productive time that the individual contributes in that assignment.

Issue 3: Notice Time Given/Needed

One striking feature of the analysis of notice given/needed data is

that on the average the amount of actual notice time given to individuals was somewhat less than the amount they preferred in order to adequately prepare for the transfer. Burke (1974), Fisher, Wilkins, and Eulberg (1982) and Pinder (1979) point to the importance of notice time in affecting attitudes towards transfers. Emphasis upon giving additional notice time seems warranted, although the amount of notice time needed does vary according to whether the transfer is Conus or overseas and on the marital status of the individual.

Issue 4: Factors Which Relate To Transfer Attitude/Ease

Two questions were really at issue in this set of analyses. First was simply the question of what factors were mentioned as having the most significant effect on attitudes towards transfers or the ease with which transfers could be made. A second issue was whether or not these factors varied across individuals depending on whether they had made few or many career transfers.

If we examine the ten survey items together with these two questions in mind, several interesting conclusions can be drawn. In question II, III, IV, and V concerning the ease with which transfers are made, three major factors seem to consistently be mentioned: (1) advance planning and organization, (2) information, and (3) financial issues. In our interviews, respondents frequently made statements such as "start planning your move as soon as you can," or "don't wait until the last minute." While advanced planning and organization seemed to be a key factor in making the transfer process easier, several obstacles were mentioned that

often precluded such planning. First was the issue of notice time given. As noted earlier, it would seem that efforts to increase notice time, particularly for overseas transfers and transfers involving married personnel, would be helpful. A second obstacle was the delay between getting notified of a transfer and receiving the official orders which allowed the individual to begin "processing out." Within the general category of advanced planning, the issue of delays in receiving orders was mentioned very frequently. The timely arrival of orders well in advance of the transfer date seems especially important for individuals who are inexperienced in transfers, i.e. persons who have made very few transfers or persons early in their USAF career. More experienced movers seemed to have found ways to "get around" some of the problems associated with delays in orders, while less experienced individuals seem to feel that a delay in orders creates an impenetrable wall that prevents adequate transfer preparation. A third, and very special obstacle to the planning process, deals with the cancellation of transfer orders. Perhaps the most unhappy individuals we interviewed were those who had received notice of a transfer, begun to plan for the transfer, and then had the transfer canceled. One individual had even sold his house in preparation of the transfer, only to have the transfer canceled. Our talks with individuals at the Manpower and Personnel Center (MPC) in San Antonio, as well as with persons at the Consolidated Base Personnel Offices (CBPO) at each base, indicated a knowledge of this problem. We cannot, however, stress too much the detrimental nature of this problem, particularly if a cancellation of

orders has occurred more than once in a person's USAF career. The reduction to an absolute minimum of such cancellations would seem to be a worthy and very profitable goal for USAF policy makers.

The second major factor that contributed to the ease of transfers was information. Two types of information are at issue here: (1) information about processing from one assignment into a new assignment and (2) information about the new assignment. Perhaps the most frequently mentioned problem associated with out-processing could be called the "standing in dozens of lines" problem. Respondents indicated that, while a centralized list of what information was necessary to out-process was available from the CBPO, the information itself was scattered throughout several widely separated offices. The need to have this information (including forms to fill out, etc.) in one booklet was mentioned by many of our respondents. One suggestion that we would make as a result of these interviews is that MPC personnel consider the development of such a booklet developed with the help of experienced movers and also of inexperienced movers who have recently undergone a transfer experience.

For the most part, individuals in our sample felt that the USAF was making a very good effort to provide information about the new assignment to which an individual is transferring. Some variability in the value of information provided by sponsors was indicated. As we can see from the data presented in Table 11, although more than half of the sample had received sponsor information, such information did not seem to have a consistent effect upon the feelings concerning the adequacy of their

knowledge about the new assignment. Several of our sample members suggested that the program which allows individuals to go on a TDY to their new assignment to collect information prior to transfer was an excellent program. They suggested, however, that this program was not as widely known about as it should be - particularly by individuals who were new to the transfer experience. It seems that this TDY program which is very favorably received by individuals who have participated in it (and which may have excellent long term benefits for the USAF) is not benefiting as many people as it could/should.

The third major factor associated with the ease/difficulty of moving was financial issues. Two major points came out in regard to finances. The first was that advance financial planning seemed to be a critical difference found between the transfer preparations of experienced vs. inexperienced movers. The ability to financially plan for a transfer seemed to have wide ranging beneficial effects. A number of individuals stated that they began preparing financially for the next transfer as soon as they were settled in their present assignment. Individuals who move frequently are penalized in that they lose time between transfers to rebuild their financial resources, and suffer greater total financial losses due to moving.

A second major point associated with financial concerns, is that the financial burden placed upon personnel who undergo transfers is considerable. In our interviews, the non-reimbursed cost of a transfer ranged from about \$600.00 for a single individual who was early in his USAF

career, to \$3000.00+ for a married NCO with children and several years of military service. It should be noted that this financial burden is considerably greater over the career of an individual if that person is transferred frequently. We did not expect, nor did we find, any ready solutions for this problem. It is something that can be dealt with only at the highest levels of policy making in the USAF. Our study supports what many already know, i.e. transfers are a financial burden for many USAF personnel. We do want to emphasize the special burden of frequent movers who must shoulder this burden more often and have less time in which to recover financially from each transfer. Special consideration of these individuals seems warranted.

Another issue related to the financial burden has to do with weight limits for the shipment of household goods. Many NCOs in our sample were unhappy with what they saw as discriminatory weight limits. They felt that an NCO with three children and fifteen years of service is likely to have as many possessions to ship as an officer with the same sized family and in the same career experience category, yet the NCO's weight limit is much lower. This is certainly an area which USAF policy changes would be well received by the transferees to whom we spoke.

When examining the factors which contribute to the reluctance of individuals to make a particular transfer, no real surprises were found. As one would expect, the general attractiveness of the new assignment was an important factor in determining attitude toward the transfer. Two interesting comments can be made, however. First, individuals who joined

the USAF for "adventure" and had maintained that sense of adventure while in the USAF, were more eager to transfer than others. This seems to be more a personal characteristic rather than a characteristic of the transfer procedure or transfer assignment. Secondly, there was a greater role played by job-related factors in determining transfer attitude than we really expected. Individuals who were transferring to a job which was in their career field and was seen as a job that "matched" their abilities, interests, and training, were far more likely to view the transfer positively than individuals moving to less desirable job situations. Our interviews indicate that transferring individuals to jobs which match their training and are in their career field is very, very critical in determining transfer attitude and may compensate for some less desirable aspects of the transfer.

Differences between high PCS and low PCS frequency individuals. No dramatic differences were found between individuals who had made many vs. few transfers in terms of the factors which affected their PCS attitude. In table 9, Question IX, we can see a somewhat greater emphasis by low PCS personnel on leaving family and friends. This would be consistent with the fact that low PCS personnel have a longer time in a particular assignment to develop stable friendships and ties between their family and the community. Also in Table 9, Question VIII, we see a somewhat greater propensity for high PCS personnel to mention adventure/change as an important factor in determining their attitude towards a PCS. Taken as a whole, however, factors affecting PCS attitude seem reasonably consistent across the two PCS frequency groups.

Issue 5: Factors Associated With An Ideal Job

Data associated with Issue 5 lead us to conclusions identical to those mentioned above in Issue 4. Individuals transferred to assignments with jobs that are in their career field, match their training, and offer some sense of challenge and responsibility were far more likely to view the transfer positively than individuals who transferred to less well match job assignments. Our interviews seemed to indicate that a "good job" could counteract other negative aspects of a transfer assignment. On the other hand, some of the most disgruntled individuals with whom we spoke had been transferred to both a less than ideal location and a job for which they were over- or underqualified. Given these findings, along with the strong relationship found between PCS attitude and perceived advancement (Shaw, Fisher and Woodman, 1983b), an emphasis upon "job match" in making transfer decisions seem warranted. Additionally the job match issue could certainly affect the time necessary to adjust to the new job situation and thus the amount of "profitable time" the individual spends in the new assignment.

Issue 6: Expectations And Reluctance To Transfer

As with issue 5, our conclusion from the data collected concerning the sources of transfer information are similar to those already discussed in Issue 4. While the sponsor program was a source of information for 55.2% of our sample, this information did not seem to be the key determinant of whether the individual "knew what to expect" in the new assignment. Emphasis upon the programs such as TDY to the new base seems warranted. Respondents also suggested that information provided as part of the

sponsorship program varied considerably in quality. They were not, however, detailed enough in their comments to allow us to make specific suggestions for improvement.

Summary

We feel that the present study provided us with very valuable information concerning the transfer process in the USAF. A summary of our major conclusions is found below:

(1) Career Intent, Intent to Reenlist, USAF satisfaction, and Attitude Toward Future Moves are predictable from data relevant to the transfer process.

(2) The USAF should examine the "adjustment time" needed to become a "profitable" individual following a transfer. Our findings suggest that when individuals are moved into dissimilar job situations the amount of time necessary to adjust to the transfer increases. The average length of these transfers do not differ significantly from those of individuals moving to similar job situations. Thus the percent of profitable time for dissimilar job transfers is much smaller than for similar job transfers. Changes in transfer policies could alleviate this relative loss of productivity.

(3) Efforts should be made to increase the amount of notice time given to transferees, particularly to those going overseas and those who are married. The increase in notice time needed is not dramatic, perhaps 30-60 days.

(4) The ability to plan in advance for transfers seems critical in

determining transfer attitude. Of particular importance is the ability to financially plan for the move. We must emphasize the need for the USAF to evaluate the financial burden placed on individuals by transfers, and to particularly examine the "compounding effect" this has on individuals who move frequently. Weight limits are one contribution to this burden. An additional suggestion is to develop a "centralized" booklet which contains most of the relevant information, procedures, and forms necessary to "process out" during a transfer. Individuals in our sample cited the decentralized nature of the out processing procedure as a major source of irritation caused by transfers.

(5) The importance of "job matching" in the transfer process should be examined, and seems worthy of considerable emphasis in deciding upon particular transfer assignments.

(6) While some individuals applauded the sponsorship program, inconsistency in the information provided seems to be a problem. Information about programs such as the TDY program in which individuals may visit their new assignment prior to transfer needs to be more widely distributed.

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